

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

April 4, 2006

7:00 PM

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

Mayor Guinta called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Shea.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Long, Duval, Osborne, Pinard, O’Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, and Forest

Absent: Alderman Thibault

Mayor Guinta advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Guinta requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Eric Sawyer, 40 Wilmot Street, Manchester stated:

I want to talk about the budget this evening. There seems to be an attitude that no matter what the tax rate is going to be reduced. I would hate to see it cause problems in other areas and I wouldn’t want to save \$50 on my taxes and have to pay another \$200 on my insurance because the insurance rating from the Fire Department flipped from a Class 2 to a Class 3, which is a real possibility, especially because it is up for reexamination this year. In terms of insurance, Manchester residents already pay the highest rates for automobile insurance in the state because of our deplorable traffic division. So again I would hate to see you give me \$10 in one pocket and take \$50 out in the other. That is basically what I wanted to point out. Thank you.

Katherine Gatsas, 568 Island Pond Road, Manchester stated:

I am before the Committee this evening to speak of educational issues that impact every citizen in this community. It is our duty as a responsible community and our expectation as a nation to facilitate literate American citizens. The architects of our republic knew well that

the preservation of our freedom and civil liberties are dependent upon a literate citizenship. An alarming 77% of the Manchester school age children scored below reading proficiency levels as reported by recent assessment results. Manchester taxpayers are invested in the business of education and are deserving of a higher return on their investment. Low student performance is not exclusive to the School Department or the School Board. It is an issue affecting all citizens. Let's banish the blame game and unite as a concerned community in search of solutions. Here is my proposal. Let's maximize the use of our community TV resources by delivering educational reading instruction directly into the homes of Manchester's children. I recommend that reading instruction programs be aired during school hours for our pre-school population, after school hours and on Saturday and Sunday. Manchester Community TV has the resources to offer a learning alternative to Saturday morning cartoon viewing. We can succeed with my proposal with no additional cost to taxpayers. I suggest the Manchester School Department partner with the Linda Moot Bell instructional reading program and broadcast reading instruction on ME TV, Manchester Educational Television. The President of the Colorado School District 60, a high poverty, high minority school district, struggled to close their students achievement gap. They partnered with the Linda Moot Bell learning processes and achieved unprecedented results. Linda Moot Bell reports it is common for individuals to gain several grade levels in decoding ability in four to six weeks. Four to six weeks of intensive instruction. I believe the marriage between ME TV and Linda Moot Bell is a winner for our community. Thank you.

Tammy Simmons, 142 Parker Street, Manchester stated:

I just wanted to come before you tonight and mention the budget proposal that was put forth by the Mayor and emphasize how important it is that I think the entire Board remember that the voters in Manchester asked for a tax cut and a tax cut is being proposed and I think it is really important that you do everything you can to give the taxpayers what they asked for. From what I understand there is no cut to Fire or Police. We can twist it and say well we are going to cut the Fire Department to save me \$50 but I really don't think that is the case and to be honest it is my \$50 and I kind of think I would like it back. Thank you.

Vivian Havee, 99 Winter Street, Manchester stated:

I want to thank you. It is a difficult task being able to cut our taxes.

Jane Beaulieu, 609 South Main Street, Manchester stated:

I would like to make a few points this evening. A few things are happening that I have been reading about in the newspaper. First I would like to just mention about the money that the Airport is receiving for a new runway and storage. I know that there have been residents in that ward who live in that neighborhood that have been complaining about the deicer smell that they have every day in the winter time every time they open up their door. I would like to see if perhaps some of the Board members could maybe meet with the Airport Authority to talk about that problem. I think there has been some talk about treating the deicer on site so that it doesn't go into Cohas Brook, which does in turn go into the neighborhoods and the

Merrimack River. That is the one point I would like to make. Perhaps some of that money instead of going to storage could go into treating the deicer. Secondly, I would like to just talk about the land proposal. There is a land deal off of Wellington Road. The proposed 16 acres or the 10 acres that could be developed for workforce housing. I think it really should be investigated and should be discussed an awful lot more than what you are discussing at this time. I think workforce housing is a phrase that is being used way too often to be able to get a hold of land today in the City. I know it is a good way to increase tax revenue but I think you really need to take a look at who needs the apartments, what workforce are we talking about and let's sort of step back a little bit and take a look at maybe doing a little bit of landbanking for six months to a year and take a look at that land. There is very little open space left in the City to develop so we really need to not act hastily in securing this deal with Anagnost Developers at this time. Lastly, I would like to talk about the natural resources coordinator's position that is being eliminated in this next budget. I think it is very necessary to have that position in the department of lands and buildings to work with the Planning Department. It is very necessary to keep that position funded. It is the only person who really looks after our natural resources in this City. The Conservation Commission is there but they are only a Commission and this coordinator's position is really a liaison between the City departments and the City Board. Thank you for your time.

Keith Hirschmann, 296 Dunbarton Road, Manchester stated:

What I would like to discuss is the budget proposal by the Honorable Mayor, Frank Guinta. Thank you, Mayor Guinta, for coming forth with your campaign promises of a tax cut, supporting the Police Department and adding officers to reduce crime in our City. It is very important that these initiatives go forward and I want to thank you personally in public. I think you did a commendable job bringing that forward and I hope that everyone will support it. I think it is especially important that technology advances and that the Comstat software is purchased for the Police Department. This will best utilize our officers in the areas where they need to be, which will make those six officers look like twelve. It is a genius idea and I think that Mayor Guinta's travels to New Jersey to investigate this could save the City a lot of money in the future. I would also like to say that I believe the proposed Fire Department shifting of a body from administration is a good idea. I think that not hurting the ladder companies and the budget in that regard is a good thing. Supporting our Fire and Police departments fully. It is very thoughtful and very proactive to do something like that. With regard to cutting taxes, I was lucky enough to be on the Board in the late 1990's when we had our last revaluation and was lucky enough to serve with a Mayor who had the courage to put forward a tax cut, which was Ray Wieczorek and our group of republican controlled Aldermanic Board was able to deliver on that tax cut. I am not offering you to accept the challenge. You don't want us to be remembered as the only Board that could deliver a tax cut. I am saying it with a smile on my face. I am putting the challenge out to you. We wouldn't be thought of as the only group that could do it so the challenge is on you. In the other regard, the workforce housing issue is very important to our community. On a serious note, Brady-Sullivan has really gone in a quick manner buying up

workforce housing units and converting them to condos. Condos are good because people have ownership stakes but renters are suffering because there is a lack of rental property. I would look seriously at the Anagnost property on Karatzas Avenue. I think that those housing units could be instrumental in helping renters in the City. Thank you.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman DeVries, duly seconded by Alderman Shea it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Duval, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk